

Proclamation 5790 of April 6, 1988**Dennis Chavez Day, 1988**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

April 8, 1988, is the Centennial Anniversary of the birth of New Mexico's Dennis Chavez, the first native-born Hispanic elected to the United States Senate and for many years the highest-ranking Hispanic in the Federal government. All Americans join the people of the Land of Enchantment and Hispanic Americans throughout our country in saluting the memory of this public servant, who left school as a child to help support his family and went on to become a lawyer, State Representative, U.S. Representative, and U.S. Senator.

Without a high school education, Dennis Chavez served as an interpreter of Spanish during Senator A. A. Jones's successful Senatorial campaign and in 1918 became a Senate clerk. He passed a special entrance examination for Georgetown University Law School and returned to New Mexico to practice law after earning his law degree in 1920. He was a New Mexico State Representative in 1923–24. In 1930 he won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, and in 1935 he was appointed to fill a vacancy in the United States Senate. He won election in his own right the next year and was reelected four times; he died in office on November 18, 1962.

As a Senator, Dennis Chavez chaired the Committee on Public Works and served on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. He sought the well-being of every American and displayed lasting concern for those in need. Dennis Chavez truly exemplified the dedication of the public servant and won distinction in the service of New Mexico and of his Nation; to this day, his life and career symbolize the countless achievements of Hispanic Americans and demonstrate the opportunity America offers.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 206, has designated April 8, 1988, as "Dennis Chavez Day" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim April 8, 1988, as Dennis Chavez Day. I urge Government agencies and the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

RONALD REAGAN